

# Brookline Preservation Commission

## Local Historic District Report

Address: 151 and 153 Babcock Street

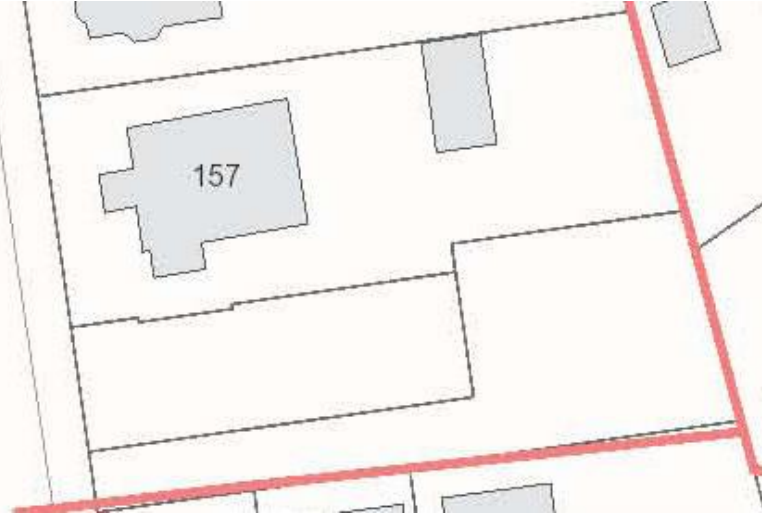
District: Graffam McKay LHD

Applicant: 151-153 Babcock Street LLC

Date Built:

Architect:

Builder:



### Statement of Significance:

In 2018, 157 Babcock Street subdivided its lot into three separate lots. This created two new empty, developable lots, according to the Zoning Bylaw, in the Graffam McKay LHD known as 151 and 153 Babcock Street.

### Proposed Alterations:

The applicant is proposing to construct two new residential buildings, one on each new vacant parcel. The applicant is proposing a single family structure on the front lot (151) and a two family structure on the rear lot (153).

### Applicable Guidelines:

- If a window in new construction has insulating glass and if the division of the lites of glass by muntins is deemed appropriate by the Commission, it should have either true divided lites with muntins no wider than 7/8" or (i) permanently applied muntins no wider than 7/8" and (ii) dark colored internal spacer bars, but it should not have either flat muntin grids applied to the inside or outside panes nor removable muntin grids.
- New and replacement windows should not be clad in non-historic materials. Vinyl or vinyl-clad and metal-framed sash, and replacement windows incorporating external storm panels that are integrated into the sash, should not be used.

- Masonry walls and iron fences should be maintained.
- New construction should respect the existing historic streetscape. The historic relationship of buildings to the street, including setbacks and open spaces, should be maintained.
- In areas where historic garages are generally detached, new garages should be detached. Attached garages should be located behind the main mass of the house and/or not facing the street, if possible.
- The Commission will consider the appropriateness of the size and shape of the building or structure in relation to both the land area upon which the building or structure is situated and to buildings and structures in the vicinity. The Commission may impose dimensional and setback requirements more restrictive than those required by the Zoning By-law.
- The Commission will consider discrete additions and new buildings incorporating non-historical design vocabularies and materials, as long as they are otherwise consistent with the intent of the Guidelines.

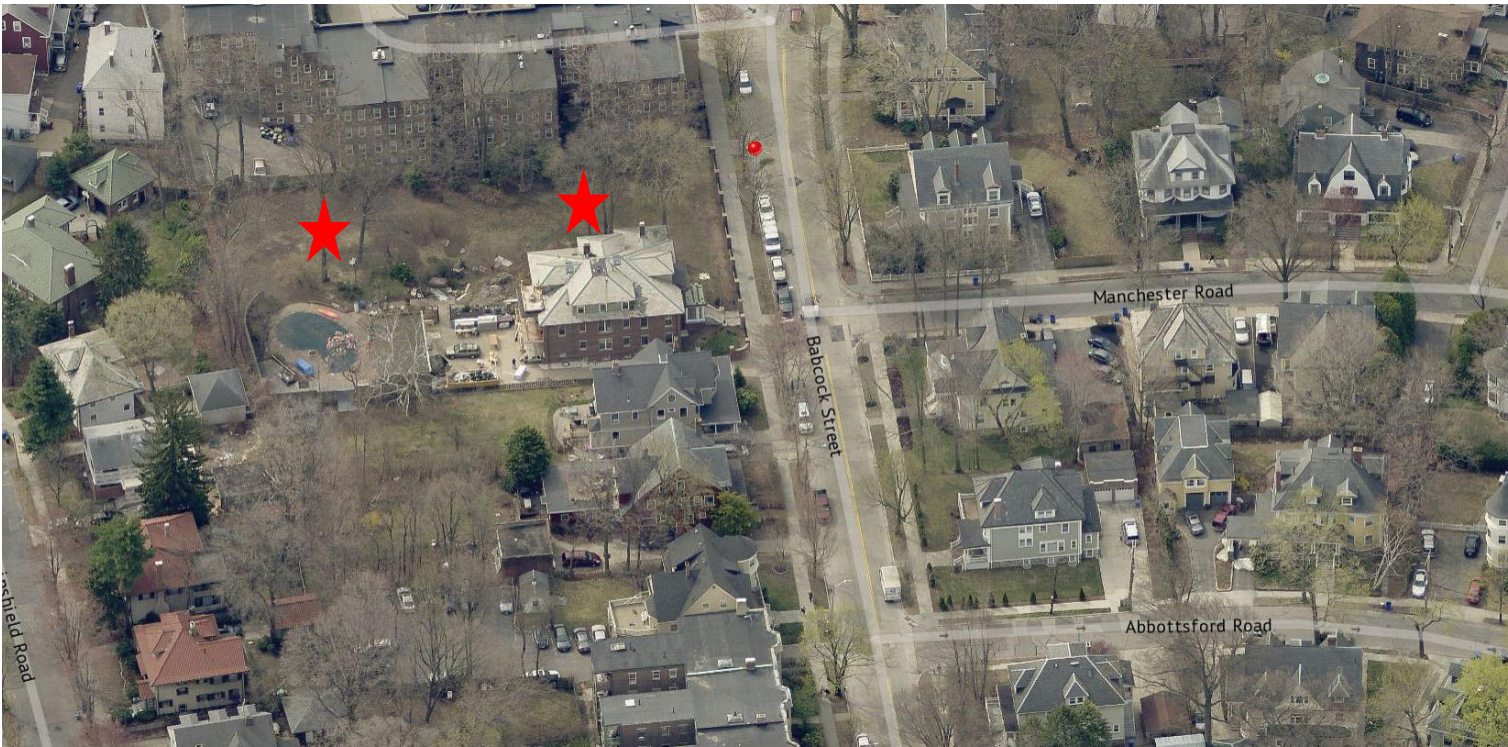
### Preliminary Findings:

At its September 25, 2019 public hearing the Preservation Commission first reviewed the applicant's proposal as part of an advisory review. The Commission provided the applicant with feedback intended to be incorporated into the application. Comments included that both buildings appeared too large for the site, there was too much asphalt and parking, concerns regarding the number and visibility of the garages, and that the front stairs should face towards the street. The Commission also discussed the location of the proposed shared driveway. At its November 25, 2019 public hearing the Commission reviewed the application to construct the new dwellings. At the time the applicant was proposing to construct a two family structure on each lot. Additionally, the applicant had altered the driveway to be on the left side of the front structure, and had redesigned the front structure so that the front steps faced and led down to Babcock Street. The Commission had strong concerns including the massing and volume of structures, height, amount of pavement, as well as the grading of the lots, and the overall concern that the applicant was proposing too much for the site.

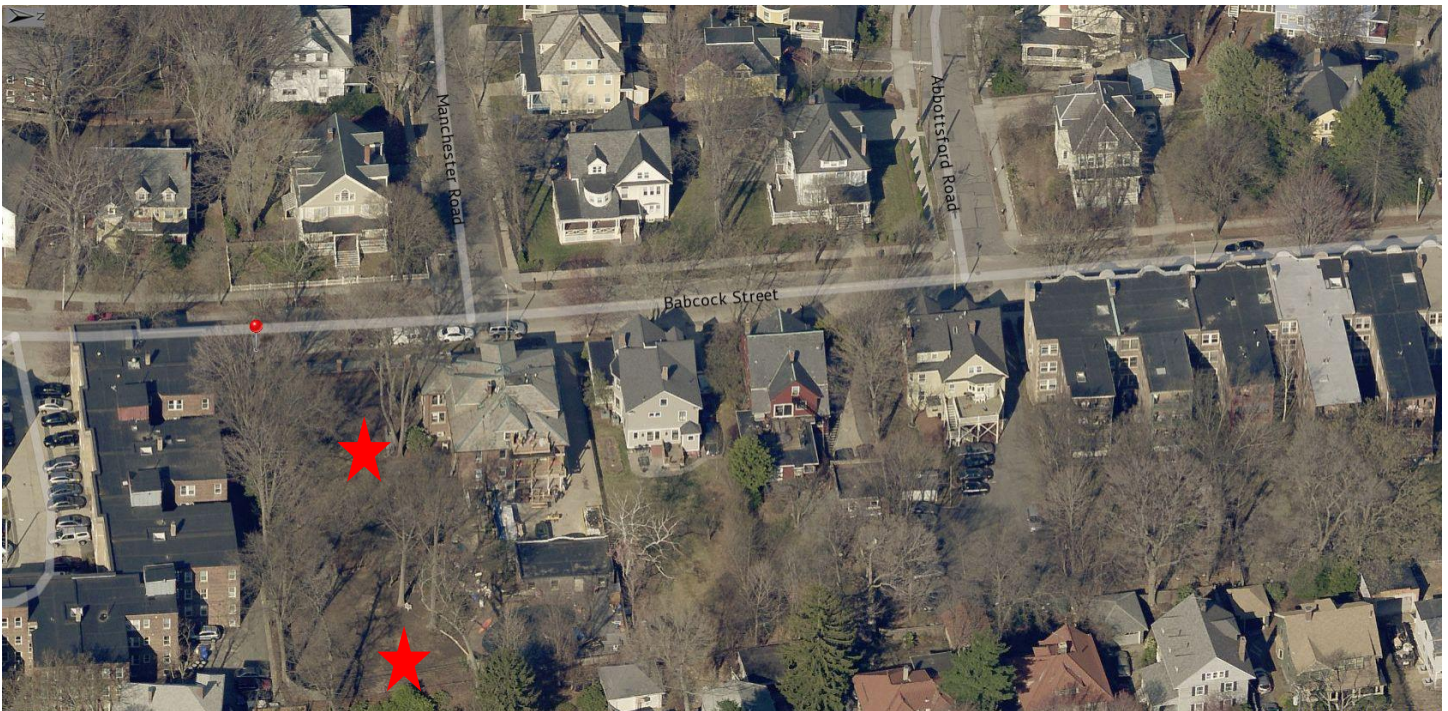
At its February 11, 2020 public hearing the Commission reviewed a revised set of plans. Those plans reflected a number of changes, most notably the change in use of the rear lot building from a two to a single family dwelling. Additionally, the applicant moved the garage to the right side of the façade of the rear building, in order to conceal it from street view. The Commission had concerns about the distance of the front two family building to the condo building abutting the property directly to the right, and recommended the applicant explore obtaining a special permit and shift the front building to the left. The applicant has since discussed this option with their land use attorney, who advised against the idea as the Zoning Board of Appeals rarely grants special permits for setbacks for new construction. In order to address the Commission's concerns, the applicant has relocated the driveway back to its original location, to the right of the property, which shifted the front building to the left. The applicant did alter the façade of the rear building to have the garage now be on the left, to once again attempt to conceal it from street view as much as possible behind the front building.

The Commission also raised questions about the length of the front building. In response, the applicant has proposed to alter the use of both buildings, the front building now being proposed as a single family and the rear building a two family. By doing this the applicant reduced the massing of the front building, and shortened the overall length. While the rear building has now gone back to a proposed two family, the applicant has worked to maintain a similar façade as the previously proposed single family. Additional massing in the rear building was obtained by pushing the right side of the façade forward. Also at the February hearing, the Commission suggested that the applicant explore ways to consider surface or at grade parking in order to alleviate grading concerns. The applicant has since looked at and provided different parking schemes (see attachment), and has stated concerns with zoning, turnaround space and a reduction in living area. Thus the applicant is still working on lowering the grade and building heights to reach an option acceptable to the Commission.



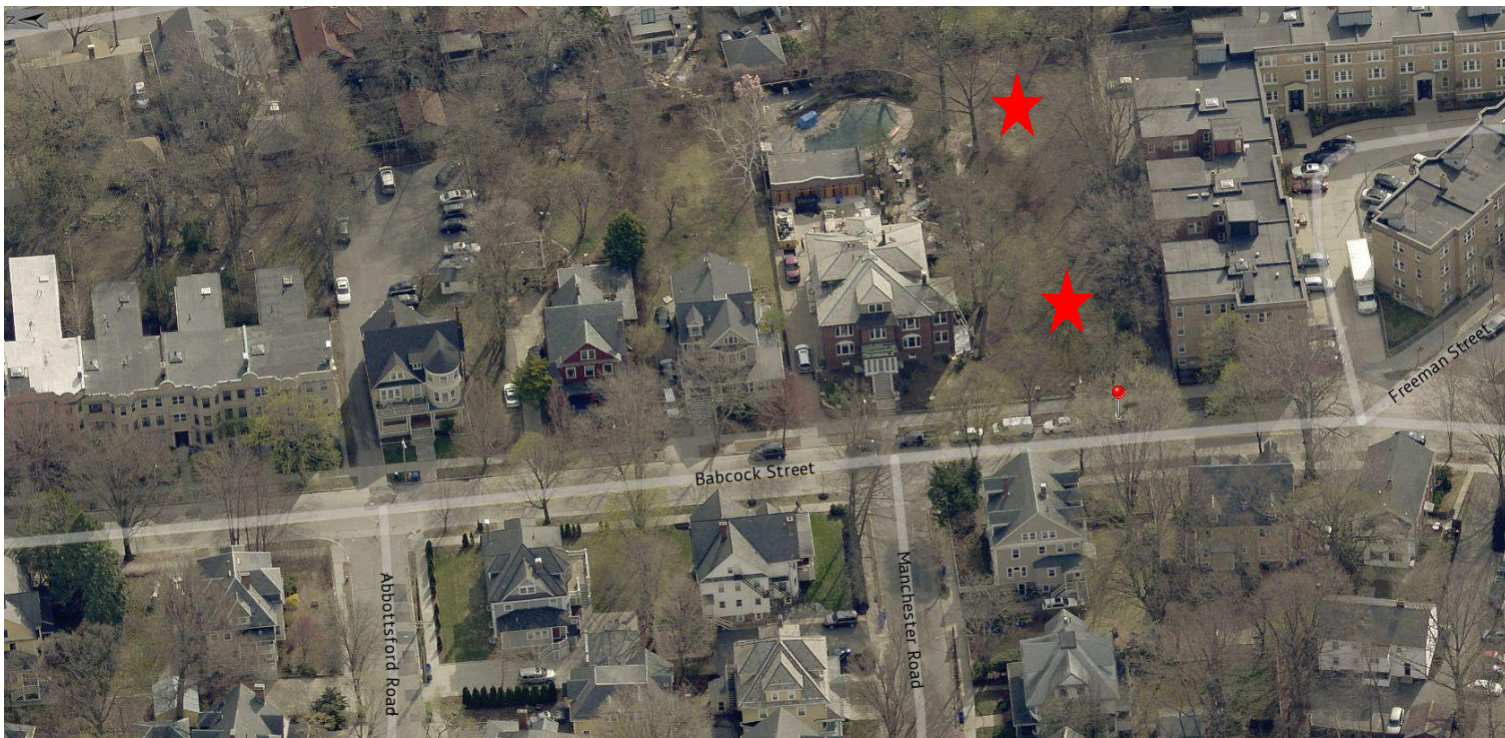


Aerial view of 151 and 153 Babcock Street, looking south.



Aerial view of 151 and 153 Babcock Street, looking east.



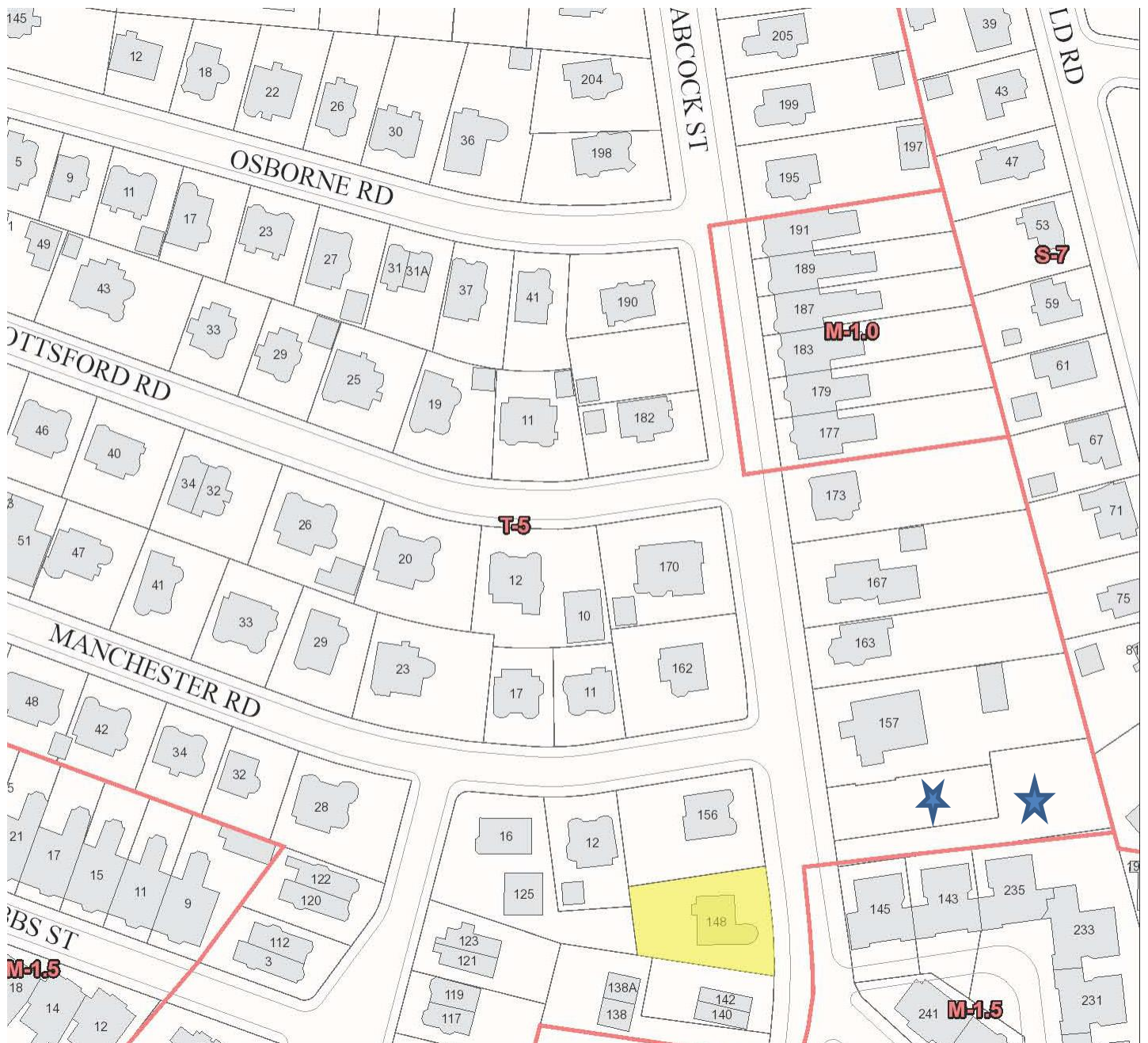


Aerial view of 151 and 153 Babcock Street, looking west.



Aerial view of 151 and 153 Babcock Street, looking north.





Larger assessor's map of the area and newly created lots (blue stars represent 151 and 153 Babcock Street)





Photograph of existing conditions with 157 Babcock Street to the left





Photograph of existing conditions with 157 Babcock Street to the left





Photograph of existing conditions with 157 Babcock Street to the left





Photograph of existing conditions with 157 Babcock Street to the left





Photograph of the stake representing the front of the building at 151 Babcock Street next to 157 Babcock Street





Photograph of the stake representing the approximate location of the rear of the shared driveway where it turns left





Photograph taken from the rear property line looking towards Babcock Street